

UNEMPLOYMENT, MARCH 1978 PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES

INQUIRIES

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MAIN FEATURES

Note: Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraphs 11 to 14 below. Standard errors of March 1978 estimates and of February to March movements are shown in the tables.

- Between February and March 1978 the number of unemployed persons is estimated to have decreased by 56,000 (33,500 males, 22,500 females).

- The main elements in this decrease were:

Unemployed persons looking for full-time work:

Aged 15-19 years	30,100
Aged 20 years and over	20,400
Total	50,500

Unemployed persons looking for part-time work: 5,600.

- In March 1978 an estimated 345,300 persons (203,100 males, 142,200 females) were unemployed, looking for full-time work, representing 6.3 per cent of the full-time labour force.
- 75,700 persons (18,300 males, 57,400 females) were unemployed, looking for part-time work (7.9 per cent of the part-time labour force).

beginning on the Monday between the 6th and 12th of each month. The information obtained relates to the week prior to the interview (i.e. the survey week). Before February 1978 the interviews were spread over four weeks, chosen so that the survey weeks generally fell within the limits of the calendar month.

Definitions

3. For purposes of the survey, unemployed persons are those aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the survey week and:

- (a) had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week and:
 - (i) were available for work in the survey week, or would have been available except for temporary illness (i.e. lasting for less than four weeks to the end of the survey week); or
 - (ii) were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the survey week and would have started in the survey week if the job had been available then;

or (b) were waiting to be called back to a full-time or part-time job from which they had been stood down without pay for less than four weeks up to the end of the survey week (including the whole of the survey week) for reasons other than bad weather or plant breakdown.

This definition of unemployed persons conforms closely to that recommended by the Eighth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1954).

Revision of series

4. Because the February and March 1978 estimates are based on revised population estimates derived from the results of the 1976 Population Census and were obtained by using a new sample and new questionnaire, they are not comparable with those in issues of this publication prior to February 1978.

5. In order to provide estimates for earlier periods as comparable as possible with those on the new basis, the unemployment estimates for August 1976 to November 1977 were revised. Information concerning the methods used in the revision was given in the previous issue of this publication.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

This bulletin contains preliminary unemployment estimates derived from the monthly population survey. Until February 1978, surveys were conducted in February, May, August and November each year. More detailed estimates are published in *The Labour Force (Preliminary)* (6202.0) and *The Labour Force* (6203.0).

The population survey

2. The survey is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (about 30,000 houses, flats, etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.), and covers about two-thirds of one per cent of the population of Australia. The information is obtained from the occupants of selected dwellings by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers, the interviews generally being conducted during the two weeks

Population benchmarks

6. The population survey estimates are calculated in such a way as to conform to the independently estimated distribution of the population by age and sex. As a consequence, whenever these population "benchmarks" are revised it becomes necessary to revise the labour force estimates also.

7. The survey estimates for the period from August 1976 are based on population benchmarks derived from the results of the 1976 Population Census, adjusted for underenumeration. For information concerning these population estimates see *Population and Vital Statistics (Preliminary) : December Quarter 1976* (3211.0).

The new sample and new questionnaire

8. The new sample was selected in order to reflect the changes in the distribution of the population shown by the 1976 Population Census results. The questionnaire, which had undergone little change since 1960 except for the inclusion in 1975 of additional questions on job-seeking, was revised to provide more accurate and more detailed information concerning the labour force.

9. Copies of both the new questionnaire and the one previously used, together with a description of the main features of the new questionnaire, are contained in *Information Paper : Questionnaires used in the Labour Force Survey* (6232.0) issued on 17 March 1978.

Comparability of series

10. When comparing unemployment estimates for February and March 1978 with those for earlier periods it should be noted that with the introduction of monthly surveys the interviews are now conducted during a two-week period, whereas formerly the period was four weeks. (See paragraph 2.) This change of timing may affect the level of the figures for any month, but particularly for months such as February, during which unemployment may be changing rapidly.

Reliability of the estimates

11. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings they, and the movements derived from them, are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included in the survey. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included in the survey, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

12. Standard errors of March unemployment estimates and of estimates of the movement in unemployment from February to March 1978 are

contained in the tables. Examples of the use of these two sets of standard errors are given below.

- (a) The estimate of 345,300 unemployed persons looking for full-time work in March 1978 has a standard error of about 5,100, and therefore there are about two chances in three that the value that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey will fall within the range 340,200 to 350,400 and about nineteen chances in twenty that the value will fall within the range 335,100 to 355,500.
- (b) The estimate of movement in the number of unemployed persons looking for full-time work from February to March 1978 is a decrease of 50,500. The standard error of this estimate of movement is about 4,300 and therefore there are about two chances in three that if all dwellings had been included in the surveys the decrease would have been within the range 46,200 to 54,800 and about nineteen chances in twenty that it would have been within the range 41,900 to 59,100.

13. Details of standard errors of quarter-to-quarter changes can be obtained from the Technical Note included in the November 1977 issue of *The Labour Force* (6203.0). These standard errors will be sufficiently accurate for use with the revised series.

14. Further details on the sampling variability of the estimates were published in the February 1978 issue of *The Labour Force (Preliminary)* (6202.0).

Seasonally adjusted estimates

15. As explained in previous issues of this publication, the move to the higher level of unemployment since 1974 appears to have been accompanied by shifts in the pattern of seasonal variation. For this reason the publication of seasonally adjusted quarterly figures of unemployment has been suspended. The matter will be kept under review. Calculation of seasonally adjusted monthly figures will not be possible until results for two or three years are available.

Comparability with Commonwealth Employment Service figures

16. The survey estimates of unemployed persons looking for full-time work may differ from the number of persons registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) as not employed, awaiting placement in full-time employment, for a number of reasons, including the following :

- (a) the survey estimates include some unemployed persons (particularly females) who did not register with the CES
- (b) they exclude persons who worked for one hour or more during the survey week, although they may have been registered with the CES – for example because they became unemployed during the week or worked for only short periods

- (c) they exclude persons registered as unemployed who found jobs or who were no longer looking for work but did not notify the CES of their changed situation
- (d) they represent averages over a period (see paragraph 2), whereas the CES figures refer to numbers registered on the Friday nearest the end of the month. This is particularly important at times when there are substantial rises or falls in unemployment or in registrations with the CES
- (e) they are subject to sampling variability. (See paragraphs 11 to 14.)

Related Publications

17. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available on request :

The Labour Force (Preliminary) (6202.0)
The Labour Force (6203.0)
Information Paper : Questionnaires used in the Labour Force Survey (6232.0)
Job Vacancies (6218.0) and (6231.0).

All publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Catalogue of Publications 1977* (1101.0), which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

NOTE. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components in the tables are due to rounding.

R. J. CAMERON
 Australian Statistician

TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (a) (Preliminary Estimates)

Month	Number ('000)						Unemployment rate (b) (per cent)					
	Looking for full-time work						Looking for full-time work					
	Aged 15-19 years			Aged 20 years and over	Total	Looking for part-time work	Total	Looking for full-time work			Looking for part-time work	Total
	Looking for first job	Total	Total					Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over	Total		
MALES												
1977 -												
February	21.7	57.1	109.0	166.1	20.0	186.1	16.1	3.1	4.3	10.9	4.6	
May	13.1	50.9	112.1	163.0	21.7	184.7	14.8	3.2	4.2	10.8	4.5	
August	12.5	51.0	117.5	168.5	21.6	190.1	15.4	3.3	4.4	9.1	4.7	
November	16.5	48.1	117.1	165.2	18.0	183.2	15.7	3.3	4.3	7.4	4.5	
1978 -												
February	40.2	74.6	160.8	235.4	19.5	255.0	20.0	4.6	6.0	9.4	6.2	
March	27.0	56.0	147.1	203.1	18.3	221.5	15.0	4.2	5.2	8.9	5.4	
Standard error of -												
March estimates (c)	1.8	2.4	3.6	4.1	1.6	4.3	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.1	
February to March movement (c)	2.1	2.6	3.3	3.9	1.7	3.9	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.8	0.1	
FEMALES												
1977 -												
February	25.7	61.1	63.3	124.4	61.8	186.2	20.9	5.1	8.1	8.3	8.2	
May	16.1	51.4	61.4	112.8	56.3	169.1	18.2	4.9	7.3	7.4	7.3	
August	16.6	58.2	56.6	114.8	54.4	169.3	20.7	4.5	7.5	7.2	7.4	
November	15.5	51.9	60.3	112.2	51.4	163.6	19.2	4.9	7.5	6.5	7.1	
1978 -												
February	40.5	72.4	87.9	160.3	61.8	222.1	23.5	7.1	10.4	8.2	9.7	
March	29.8	60.9	81.3	142.2	57.4	199.6	19.8	6.6	9.2	7.6	8.7	
Standard error of -												
March estimates (c)	1.9	2.7	2.8	3.6	2.4	4.1	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	
February to March movement (c)	2.1	2.5	2.8	3.4	2.4	3.7	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	
PERSONS												
1977 -												
February	47.4	118.2	172.2	290.5	81.8	372.3	18.3	3.6	5.3	8.8	5.8	
May	29.2	102.3	173.6	275.8	78.0	353.8	16.3	3.6	5.1	8.1	5.5	
August	29.1	109.2	174.1	283.3	76.0	359.3	17.8	3.6	5.2	7.9	5.6	
November	32.0	100.0	177.4	277.4	69.4	346.8	17.4	3.8	5.2	6.7	5.5	
1978 -												
February	80.6	147.0	248.8	395.8	81.3	477.0	21.6	5.2	7.3	8.5	7.4	
March	56.8	116.9	228.4	345.3	75.7	421.0	17.2	4.8	6.3	7.9	6.6	
Standard error of -												
March estimates (c)	2.4	3.3	4.3	5.1	2.8	5.6	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	
February to March movement (c)	2.8	3.3	3.8	4.3	2.8	4.6	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	

(a) Aged 15 years and over. For definition see paragraph 3, page 1. (b) The number of unemployed in each group as a percentage of the estimated labour force (i.e. employed plus unemployed) in the same group. (c) For information on standard errors see paragraphs 11 to 14, page 2.

TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (a), STATES AND TERRITORIES (Preliminary Estimates)

State or Territory	Number ('000)					Unemployment rate (b) (per cent)				
	Looking for full-time work			Looking for part-time work		Looking for full-time work			Looking for part-time work	
	Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over	Total	Looking for part-time work	Total	Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over	Total	Looking for part-time work	Total
New South Wales —										
1978 —										
February	53.9	90.0	143.9	27.2	171.1	23.7	5.3	7.5	8.2	7.6
March	39.7	82.7	122.4	29.2	151.6	17.5	4.9	6.3	8.8	6.7
Standard error of —										
March estimates (c)	2.3	2.9	3.5	2.0	3.8	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
February to March movement (c)	2.2	2.4	3.0	1.8	3.1	1.0	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.1
Victoria —										
1978 —										
February	32.2	61.9	94.0	19.7	113.7	19.2	4.8	6.4	7.9	6.6
March	27.3	57.4	84.7	18.7	103.4	16.3	4.4	5.8	7.5	6.0
Standard error of —										
March estimates (c)	1.9	2.6	3.0	1.6	3.2	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
February to March movement (c)	1.7	2.3	2.7	1.6	2.8	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
Queensland —										
1978 —										
February	24.3	42.1	66.4	12.8	79.1	21.1	6.1	8.3	9.1	8.4
March	21.1	41.8	62.9	11.1	74.1	18.4	6.1	7.9	7.8	7.9
Standard error of —										
March estimates (c)	1.1	1.4	1.6	0.9	1.6	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
February to March movement (c)	1.2	1.3	1.4	0.9	1.6	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
South Australia —										
1978 —										
February	15.7	22.0	37.7	7.7	45.4	22.0	5.1	7.5	7.8	7.6
March	13.0	19.4	32.4	6.6	39.0	18.2	4.5	6.4	6.8	6.5
Standard error of —										
March estimates (c)	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.7	1.3	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.2
February to March movement (c)	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.8	1.2	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.2
Western Australia —										
1978 —										
February	12.5	20.4	32.8	8.9	41.8	20.0	5.0	7.0	9.9	7.4
March	9.5	17.6	27.1	6.6	33.7	15.1	4.3	5.8	7.2	6.0
Standard error of —										
March estimates (c)	0.7	0.9	1.0	0.6	1.1	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.2
February to March movement (c)	0.8	1.0	1.2	0.8	1.2	1.3	0.2	0.3	0.9	0.2
Tasmania —										
1978 —										
February	5.7	5.8	11.5	1.8	13.4	22.2	4.6	7.5	7.1	7.5
March	4.2	5.3	9.5	1.8	11.3	16.3	4.1	6.2	7.0	6.3
Standard error of —										
March estimates (c)	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	1.2	0.3	0.3	1.2	0.2
February to March movement (c)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.2
Northern Territory —										
1978 —										
February	*	3.2	3.9	*	4.5	*	8.8	9.9	*	9.5
March	*	1.8	2.7	*	2.9	*	4.9	6.8	*	6.2
Standard error of —										
March estimates (c)	..	0.3	0.4	..	0.4	..	0.8	1.0	..	0.9
February to March movement (c)	..	0.3	0.4	..	0.4	..	0.8	1.0	..	0.8
Australian Capital Territory —										
1978 —										
February	2.0	3.5	5.4	2.6	8.0	26.0	4.4	6.3	17.2	7.9
March	*	2.4	3.7	1.5	5.2	*	3.0	4.2	10.2	5.1
Standard error of —										
March estimates (c)	..	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	..	0.5	0.5	2.0	0.5
February to March movement (c)	..	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	..	0.4	0.3	1.3	0.4

(a) For definition see paragraph 3, page 1. (b) See note (b) to Table 1. (c) See note (c) to Table 1.

* Subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses.